



Department  
for Education

# Supported internships

**Guidance for:**

- **further education colleges**
- **sixth forms in academies**
- **maintained and non-maintained schools  
independent specialist providers**
- **other providers of study programmes, and**
- **local authorities**

**June 2014**

**Revised June 2017**

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# 1. Summary

## About this departmental guidance

The guidance explains what supported internships are and why they have been introduced. It also provides practical guidance on developing, implementing and delivering supported internships, including information on funding, programme design, staffing, and the various partnerships on which supported internships are founded.

## Expiry or review date

This guidance will next be reviewed before June 2018.

## Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is primarily for the use of learning providers including:

- further education colleges;
- sixth form colleges;
- sixth forms in academies, free schools and maintained schools, including special schools;
- independent specialist providers; and
- any other providers of study programmes interested in delivering supported internships.

It will also be of interest to local authorities as they determine their Local Offer, as required by the Children and Families Act, and to other bodies, such as supported employment agencies, who may be working with a learning provider as a key partner in their supported internship provision.

## Main points

The guidance draws heavily on the experiences of the 15 colleges who took part in the 2012/13 supported internship trial set up by the Department for Education<sup>1</sup>. The colleges shared key success factors and lessons learned as part of their involvement in the

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<sup>1</sup> Find out about supported internships at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-options-and-improving-provision-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-sen/supporting-pages/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-sen>. For a concise supported internship factsheet, visit <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources/pfa-resources/factsheet-supported-internships>. See the evaluation report of the supported internship trial at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-difficultiesdisabilities-supported-internship-evaluation>

evaluation of the pilot.<sup>2</sup> The guidance also draws on the experiences of other providers who have been running programmes to support young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into employment, including some who have been running for a considerable period of time, where their provision is consistent with the principles of supported internships.

The guidance has been designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to supported internships and to allow users to dip into individual sections of particular interest. It is divided into nine broad sections. Details of the specific content covered in each of these sections can be found on the Contents pages.

- Introductory information
- Planning and designing supported internships
- Job coaching
- Recruiting and engaging interns
- Working with parents and carers
- Working with employers
- Achieving positive progression
- Funding
- Further reading

Readers who want to gain a quick overview of the content are advised to focus on the summary boxes at the start of each relevant section.

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<sup>2</sup> The majority of the case studies, quotations and images included in the guidance have been contributed by the 15 trial colleges. A more detailed account of the trial can be found in the supported internship trial evaluation report.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 What is a supported internship?

From August 2013, all young people in full or part-time education aged 16 to 19 (16 to 24 where the student has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan) have been expected to follow a study programme<sup>3</sup> - a coherent, personalised learning programme that offers breadth, depth and progression. **A supported internship is one type of study programme specifically aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who have a statement of special educational<sup>4</sup> needs or an EHC plan, who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.**

All young people should be helped to develop the skills and experience, and achieve the qualifications they need to succeed in their careers. The overwhelming majority of young people with SEN are capable of sustainable paid employment with the right preparation and support. All professionals working with them should share that presumption. Colleges that offer courses which are designed to provide pathways to employment should have a clear focus on preparing students with SEN for work. This includes identifying the skills that employers value, and helping young people to develop them.

Supported internships are structured study programmes based primarily at an employer. They are intended to enable young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve sustainable, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work through learning in the workplace. Internships normally last for a year and include unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Students complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if suitable, and English and maths to an appropriate level.

#### 2.1.1 Learner journey on a supported internship

The diagram below sets out an example of a supported internship as it might be experienced by the young person during the period of the internship itself. The young person and their parents and carers will have access, in line with the SEN Code of Practice, to information, advice and guidance about their post-16 options, including supported internships, well in advance of the start of their programme, beginning with

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<sup>3</sup> For general guidance on study programmes, see <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/gandlearning/programmes>. For specific guidance on study programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, see [http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/media/309641/factsheet\\_study\\_programmes.pdf](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/media/309641/factsheet_study_programmes.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> A young person turning 25 whilst on a supported internship is able to continue on it until the end of that academic year.

their Year 9 review. Equally, for many learners, a programme of continuing support after the end of their internship may need to be in place (see section 9.3).

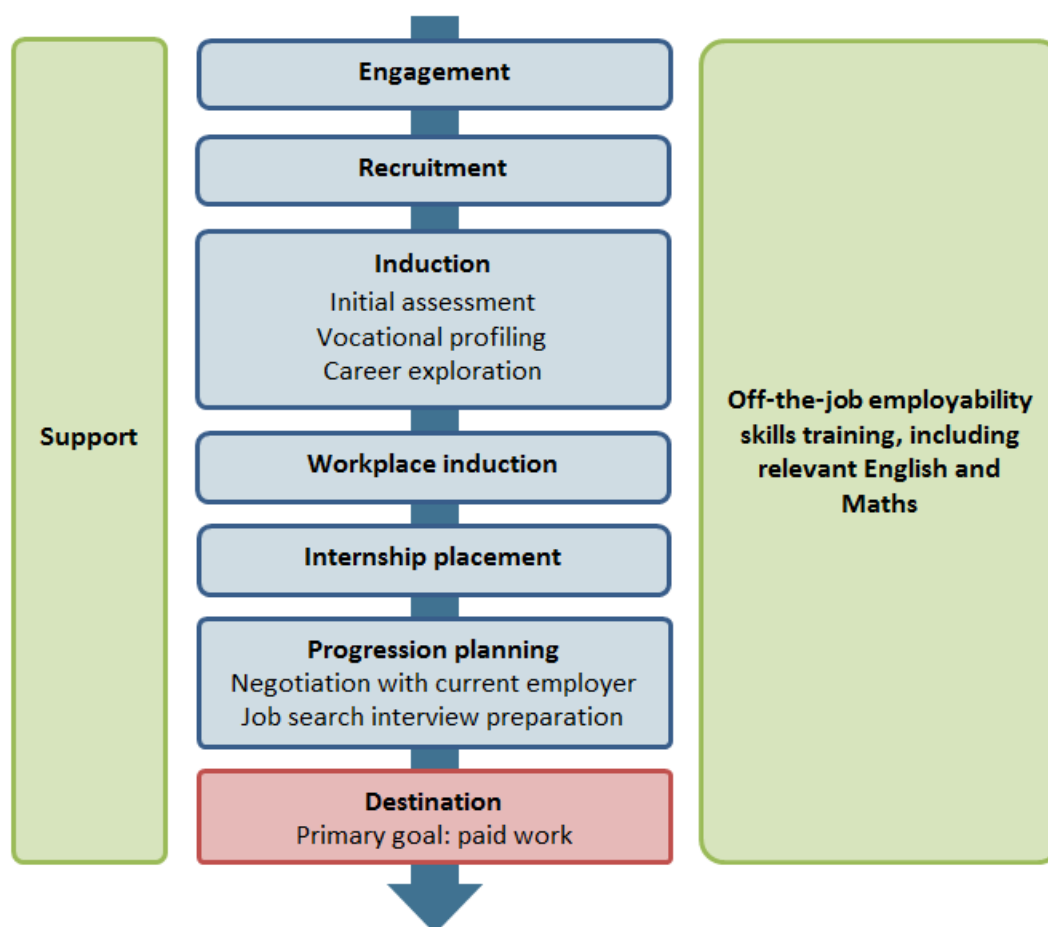


Figure 1 - An example of a supported internship

### 2.1.2 How does a supported internship differ from a traineeship or Apprenticeship?

Although similar in aims to a traineeship or Apprenticeship, supported internships differ in key ways. Young people on supported internships are expected to require a *higher level of support* than a trainee or apprentice, and to be offered workplace support in the form of a job coach, as well as support for their non-workplace learning.

A key difference to traineeships is that interns are expected to need a *longer programme* than a trainee, for whom the maximum programme length is six months, before they are ready to progress to an Apprenticeship or other sustainable employment. For more information about traineeships, see the framework for delivery of traineeships<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Department for Education (2014), *Traineeships: Framework for delivery 2015/15*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-young-people-to-develop-the-skills-for-apprenticeships-and-sustainable-employment-framework-for-delivery>

Apprentices, like interns, gain practical skills in the workplace. A key difference is that Apprentices have to pass various qualifications or assessments, for example English and maths qualifications, to complete successfully their Apprenticeship. *There are no entry or completion requirements for supported internships*, and each learning provider will work with their interns to develop a personalised programme that meets their needs and provides progression and stretch. Like supported internships and traineeships, young people who undertake Apprenticeships can retain their EHC plans while they are participating. For more information about Apprenticeships, see the Apprenticeship website.<sup>6</sup>

### **2.1.3 What is a successful outcome from a supported internship?**

The aim of supported internships is to prepare young people with complex needs for paid employment by:

- supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers;
- enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace; and
- developing confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work.

Whilst the ideal outcome from a supported internship will be the offer of a paid job from an employer, possibly the employer who hosted the intern's work placement, other outcomes include:

- building up experience for a CV, demonstrating that the young person has the skills and willingness to work;
- changing the perception of employers about employing people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- changing the perception of the young person's family that they can work;
- improving skills in English and maths that enable the young person to be better prepared for work, including handling money, interacting with the public, and practising interview skills; and
- becoming independent travellers.

Supported Internships are recorded as part of the Individualised Learning Record (ILR). We will look at how this information can be used to inform young people, their parents and local authorities.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>



## 2.2 The government's ambition for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Government policy is that young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with more complex needs, should be supported to develop the skills and gain the qualifications and experience they need to succeed in their careers. Supported internships are one means by which young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can be supported to achieve paid employment.<sup>7</sup>

This is consistent with the Government's vision for disability and employment set out in *Fulfilling Potential: Making it Happen* (DWP, 2013)<sup>8</sup>, and the wider reforms to the SEN and disability (SEND) system which is set out in the Children and Families Act.<sup>9</sup>

The Act was introduced because the former system of support was complicated, expensive and delivered poor outcomes, and children and young people struggled to get the help they needed. Local authorities spend over £5 billion a year on SEND provision, and yet:

- in 2012 at Key Stage 2, pupils with SEND achieved roughly half as well as those with no identified SEND at English and Maths (43% achieved level 4 in comparison with 91%);
- the percentage of pupils with SEND achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A\* to C was 22% in comparison with 69% with no identified SEND at Key Stage 4/5; and
- around 30% of all young people with statements of SEN at 16 are not in education, employment or training at 18 compared to 13% of their peers.

From September 2014, the special needs reforms implemented a new approach which seeks to join up help across education, health and care, from birth to 25. Help will be offered at the earliest possible point, with children and young people with SEND and their parents or carers fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve. This will help lead to better outcomes and more efficient ways of working

This includes a 0-25 Education, Health and Care Plan to replace statements which reflect the child or young person's aspirations for the future, as well as more immediate outcomes they need support to achieve.

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<sup>7</sup> For an understanding of supported internships in the wider reform context see [http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/media/312574/pfa\\_delivering\\_oct\\_2013.pdf](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/media/312574/pfa_delivering_oct_2013.pdf), a guide to implementing the reforms, based on the experience of the 20 pathfinders

<sup>8</sup> Department of Work and Pensions (2013) *Fulfilling potential: Making it Happen* <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/fulfilling-potential>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>, which builds on the proposals originally set out in the SEN Green Paper, *Support and Aspiration* (DfE, 2011) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-and-aspiration-a-new-approach-to-special-educational-needs-and-disability-consultation>

Local authorities are required to produce a 'Local Offer' of services developed with parents and young people, so that they can understand what is available, and how to complain if they need to. They must consult publicly on this Local Offer, and publish the results.

### **2.2.1 The rationale for supporting young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into employment**

The National Audit Office report [Oversight of special education for young people aged 16-25](#) published in November 2011, estimates that supporting one person with a learning disability into employment could, in addition to improving their independence and self-esteem, increase that person's income by between 55 and 95 per cent. The National Audit Office also estimates that equipping a young person with the skills to live in semi-independent rather than fully supported housing could, in addition to quality-of-life improvements, reduce lifetime support costs to the public purse by around £1 million.

These results illustrate the potential for improving the life chances of young people with SEN through employability and independence skills. Most people with a learning difficulty or disability want to work<sup>10</sup>. However, only a small percentage (7% of adults known to social services with moderate to severe learning difficulties<sup>11</sup>) is currently in paid employment. A 2007 Ofsted survey of college-based provision<sup>12</sup> for 16-18 year olds with learning difficulties and/or disabilities found that learners' progression to employment was 'under-developed' and a more recent report from Ofsted suggests that this issue remains:<sup>13</sup> hence the need for a new approach. Achieving paid employment not only brings young people financial independence, but it can be key to building confidence and self-esteem, increasing health and well-being, and to gaining friendships and a social life. There are also benefits for the economy, employers, families, the local community and wider society.

## **2.3 Why might a learning provider offer supported internships?**

The SEN Code of Practice states that FE colleges, sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies must use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision

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<sup>10</sup> 65% say they want to work. Referenced in Emerson, E., Malam, S., Davis, I. and Spencer, K. (2005), *Adults with Learning Difficulties in England*, 2003/4

<sup>11</sup> NHS Social Care and Mental Health Indicators from the *National Indicator Set: 2010-11* provisional release at [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk)

<sup>12</sup> Ofsted (2007) *Current provision and outcomes for 16- to 18-year-old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in colleges* <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/current-provision-and-outcomes-for-16-18-year-old-learners-learning-difficulties-and-or-disabilities>

<sup>13</sup> Ofsted (2011) *Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/progression-post-16-for-learners-learning-difficulties-and-or-disabilities>

which young people need. Offering supported internships can help all learning providers who educate young people with statements of SEN and EHC plans to:

- provide evidence that their provision is personalised and outcome-focused, in line with Ofsted expectations;
- support more young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in their local area into paid work, in line with government policy;
- offer a positive progression route to employment from their existing provision ;
- solve the issue of 'learner churn' or 'revolving door syndrome', where learners complete one programme and re-enrol on something very similar, rather than achieving a positive progression;
- show their commitment to equality and diversity; and
- demonstrate their responsiveness to the full range of learners in the local community.

The SEN Code of Practice states that local authorities and their partner bodies and agencies must co-operate with each other in the development and review of the Local Offer. This is essential so that the Local Offer provides a comprehensive, transparent and accessible picture of the range of services available.

Learning providers will therefore need to work with their local authority to contribute to a Local Offer which meets the needs of the full range of young people with SEN or disabilities in their local area. Supported internships are expected to be a key part of this Local Offer.

### **New Bridge School's rationale for setting up a supported internship programme**

We wanted to provide extended training for young people in real work placements. We had identified significant limitations in possible pathways for young people with a learning disability on transition into adulthood. Previous work experience had proved time-limited, at times tokenistic and generally ineffective in terms of securing pathways into employment.

### 3. Planning and designing supported internships

#### Summary

The evaluation of the trial told us that key factors in effective first-stage planning for the shaping of supported internship delivery models are:

- flexibility to meet (changing) needs of individual interns - and employers;
- induction that makes clear that the end goal is work and includes detailed assessment and profiling in relation to work;
- substantial time in the workplace;
- personalised learning provider-based learning;
- clear links between workplace and non-workplace learning
- planned progression strategies ;
- based on partnerships with specific roles and responsibilities; and
- distinction from other courses offered by the learning provider.

#### 3.1 Delivery models

Providers are free to design their supported internship programme to fit their local circumstances and to meet the needs of their learners. However, the Department for Education has set out the following principles which should be followed:

- **Principle 1** - A significant majority of the intern's time must be spent at the employer's premises. Whilst at the employer, the young person will be expected to comply with real job conditions, such as time keeping or dress code. Where appropriate, learning at the employer should use systematic instruction, a method specifically designed to help people with complex learning difficulties learn new tasks.
- **Principle 2** - Interns must do some form of learning alongside their time at the employer, including relevant aspects of English and maths.
- **Principle 3** - Jobs must work for both the young person and the employer. For the young person, the job must fit with their vocational profile, contribute to their long term career goal and be flexible enough to address barriers where necessary. For the employer, they must meet a real business need. As the goal of the programme is for the young person to end up in paid employment, where possible

the employers taking on interns should have a job available to offer at the end of it – should the intern meet the required standard.

- **Principle 4** - Central to the study programme is the provision of support to the young person and to the employer, including job coaching support. On-going support should continue to be available (including Access to Work<sup>14</sup>) should the employer offer the young person a job at the end of the internship or to support young people who do not achieve paid work to continue to work towards this end.

### 3.1.1 Key planning considerations

When exploring possible models consistent with these principles, providers will need to think through the following questions:

- What will be the overall shape of the programme and how much flexibility will we need to build in? **See section 3.**
- How long will our supported internship programme be? **See section 3.1.**
- What partners might we need to work with? **See section 3.1.**
- How much time, on average, will interns spend in the workplace? **See section 3.1.1.**
- How much time, on average, will learners spend in school/college and what learning will they do while they are there? **See section 3.1.1.**
- How will we staff our model? **See section 3.2.**
- How will we get the buy-in we need from employers, parents, young people, senior leaders, governors and others? **See sections 3.1, 5, 6 and 7**
- What forms of support might interns need and how will we meet those needs? **See sections 4 and 5.4.**
- How many and what sort of employers might we need to work with? **See section 7.**

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<sup>14</sup> Access to Work is a specialist disability service from Jobcentre Plus that gives practical advice and support to disabled people, whether they are working, self-employed or looking for employment. Access to Work is provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond the reasonable adjustments which an employer is legally obliged to provide under the Equality Act. Access to Work has been extended to the in-work element of supported internships and traineeships and can fund job coaches, specialist equipment for days that a young person is at the employer's premises, as well as the extra fares to work if the person is unable to use public transport See <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work> and <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships/access-to-work-fund>

- How much funding can we source to run our supported internships? **See section 9.**

Each of these issues is explored within the guidance. The section below focuses on the shape of the programme itself.

### **Length of programme**

The duration of a supported internship is normally a year. It should last at least six months, depending on the needs of the interns, the needs of the employer and the point at which the opportunity for paid employment arises. Providers **will not** be penalised if interns complete a supported internship earlier than originally planned in order to take up employment. Providers can run supported internships as roll-on, roll-off programmes in order to maximise flexibility and meet the needs of a larger number of interns.

### **Balance of learning time in and out of the workplace**

The first supported internship principle requires interns to spend a substantial majority of their time in the workplace. The actual amount of time will vary according to intern and employer need, and may increase during the course of the internship. Variations in time spent in the workplace may arise for a number of reasons: for example, some interns may have health issues which mean that they are unable to spend extended periods of time in the workplace, while some employers may have a business need which requires the intern to work four days a week.

Providers may choose to 'front-load' their programme with an intensive period of preparation before the interns go out into the work-place, while they prepare interns for their internship. They may also decide to introduce an intern to the workplace incrementally, stepping up the time in the workplace over a period or weeks. **However the internship is designed, the overall balance of time should be weighted in favour of the workplace**, and after an initial period, interns should be spending more of their time at work than on learning outside of the workplace.

### **Pre-placement training**

Providers might run an intensive period of pre-placement training alongside the vocational profiling and initial assessment that will be included in the early stages of all internship programmes. However, if interns require considerable and extended input before moving into the workplace, it may be that they are not yet ready for a supported internship and their needs would be better met by a preparation for employment course, with a planned progression to an internship once that has been completed.

Pre-placement learning can be used to build confidence, raise aspirations and extend interns' employability skills and knowledge of the world of work. This can support better job matching (placing the right intern in the right job role), and greater confidence and awareness of work, including different career options, leading to a greater chance of a

successful internship and an offer of employment at the end. Learning activities might include:

- research about different employment sectors, employers and job roles
- visits from employers;
- visits from inspirational speakers including role models (e.g. young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in employment);
- a variety of short work experience opportunities;
- taster sessions in different vocational areas offered by the provider; and
- practical activities (on and off-site) to develop team-work, problem-solving, confidence and communication skills

## Off the job learning

The second supported internship principle requires providers to offer interns some form of learning off the job. This learning is most valuable and best engages interns when it clearly complements their learning in the workplace and is personalised to their specific needs and aspirations. Off-the-job learning also enables interns to build up a group identity and self-help network preventing them from feeling isolated in their separate workplaces.

Off-the-job learning, once the intern has been successfully placed in an internship, can vary considerably. It will typically include employability skills and, following study programme principles, those students who haven't already achieved GCSEs at grade C in English and maths should be working towards achieving them. Interim qualifications, such as Functional Skills, free standing maths and/or ESOL can be a useful stepping stone towards achieving GCSEs. **Students who have profound or complex learning difficulties can be excluded from this requirement where appropriate.** However, given the importance of English and maths to all young people, we strongly encourage those students who are capable of taking and achieving these qualifications, although they may be stretching, to do so.

It may also include specific areas of vocational learning, including small awards in areas such as food hygiene, health and safety, lifting and handling and pesticide handling which employers identified as increasing the intern's employability in a specific sector. Some colleges on the trial offered interns larger vocational certificates, delivered over the two days a week when they were not in the workplace.

Learning outside the workplace does not mean working inside a classroom. It could include, for example:

- visits to workplaces, other than the internship employer;
- visits to job centres and (supported) employment agencies;
- travel training;

- community-based activity (e.g. a shopping trip to identify and price up suitable interview-wear);
- residential activity (e.g. to improve independence skills or build up teamwork skills); and
- use of other college facilities – e.g. learning resource centre, workshops, kitchens).

Effective ways of ensuring that learning outside the workplace complements workplace learning include:

- involving the job coach in some of the planning and delivery of the non-workplace learning
- running workshops based on issues and challenges that have arisen at work
- responding to employer requests for specific skills to be addressed
- offering tutorial sessions in which learners can reflect on progress in the workplace and help identify learning needs

Effective ways of ensuring that learning outside the workplace is personalised include:

- working with the learner, job coach and employer to identify specific learning needs
- use of qualifications which allow for achievement at different levels
- learner-led sessions
- individualised timetables
- inclusion of specific awards for individuals identified as supporting employability by employers (e.g. brush-cutting for a council parks and gardens assistant)

Interns often find that practical activities are the most enjoyable. These can be used, for example, to develop problem-solving skills, identify interns' strengths and abilities, build up a team ethic or help interns to follow instructions.

### **Planning employer involvement**

There are two main models of employer involvement that have so far been explored. Providers can operate either model or a blend of the two. They are also free to develop other models if these fit their local circumstances better, as long as the model meets with the four principles outlined earlier.

Supported internship extended work placements, unlike other forms of work experience, can be offered on-site in a school or college, provided the placement meets the four principles of the supported internship, i.e. the extended placement must be a real job, meeting a real business need, and complying with job conditions.

A supported internship is only an option for a young person with an SEN statement or EHC plan. Therefore if a young person is undertaking a work placement within the school or college, it will be recorded as part of a supported internship study programme and the young person will have a statement or EHC plan. Unless both these conditions apply, an internal placement would not meet the EFA criteria for funding.



### ***Model 1: working with a single employer***

A provider sources a single large employer who can offer multiple internships, sometimes including the opportunity for interns to rotate between different job roles. The employer may be able to provide an on-site classroom so that all the learning takes place in the work setting, including that offered by the learning provider. This is based on the Project SEARCH model<sup>15</sup>, an approach originally developed in America, which has been successfully trialled and implemented in the UK.

### ***Model 2: working with multiple employers***

Providers source multiple employers, large or small, who can offer one or possibly two internships. Interns normally stay in a single job role which may be developed and extended over the period of the internship. Occasionally, interns may combine two internships at different employers or move from one internship to a second (e.g. where their aspirations change during the programme or where an internship placement simply does not work out for either the intern or the employer).

### **Combining models**

Providers can also choose to combine these two models, with one group of interns placed with a single large employer (Model 1) and other individual interns placed with different employers (Model 2), where their needs cannot be met by the Model 1 employer.

Experiences from colleges involved in the trial

*Whatever your model, you need to differentiate the supported internship from other college programmes. It's not a college course, it's an employment programme designed to get the learners into work. The learners have to be able to see the difference.*

Examples of ways in which colleges in the trial achieved this distinctiveness include:

- requiring interns to use annual leave cards to apply for time off and have different leave entitlement to college holidays
- and holding competitive interviews for specific internships to mirror what happens in real employment situations

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.projectsearch.us>

### **Example of a variant of Model 1, where a special school is working in partnership with two large employers**

Bridging the Gap is an innovative joint partnership between New Bridge School, The Royal Oldham Hospital and Manchester Metropolitan University. Interns have the chance to try three different full time work placements over an academic year, in either the Royal Oldham Hospital or Manchester Metropolitan University. At the hospital they can choose, for example, roles in catering, in the laundry, in the pharmacy, in housekeeping or the pathology stores. Roles available in the university include opportunities in the library, in offices, in reception, and in property services. Each placement lasts for approximately 12 weeks, although length in placement can vary according to individual need.

### **Planning supported internship partnerships**

Successful internships depend on successful partnership working. The core partners will include:

- employers (and their staff, some of whom may act as 'work buddies');
- learning provider staff (e.g. vocational tutors, employer liaison officers, learning support staff);
- job coaches (whether employed by the learning provider or contracted from an external agency, such as a supported employer); and
- interns and their families.

One of the key planning decisions for learning providers will be the extent to which they involve external agencies within this core partnership. The most common external partner is a supported employment agency (SEA). SEAs can provide both employer engagement and liaison and job coaching services. Learning providers who have entered into partnership with an SEA have done so for a number of reasons including:

- access to trained, experienced job coaches with established sources of support;
- access to the SEA's existing employer network;
- ability to buy-in just the coaching hours needed and hence keep down costs; and
- flexibility to respond to varying need for job coaching (e.g. high need at the beginning of a programme to support multiple, simultaneous starts).

Providers might also choose to involve external agencies, including partner providers, in:

- helping to source employers;
- providing mentoring;
- delivering training to either interns or staff; and
- offering specialist support, such as counselling.

It is also likely that providers will draw on the support of a wider circle including, for example:

- parents/carers;
- local authorities;
- referral agencies;
- Access to Work; and
- progression partners such as the Disability Employment Advisor at Jobcentre Plus, local supported employment agencies, adult services.

They will need to factor in the time and resource needed to identify the right partners, to establish partnership-working arrangements and for on-going liaison.

### **Example of partnership-working between a college and a social enterprise**

Bicton College has partnered with Pluss, a social enterprise that supports thousands of people with disabilities and other disadvantages into employment each year. They do this through a range of specialist, local employment services and through direct employment within their own commercial enterprises. Pluss provided Bicton College with a full-time employment adviser who also provided 1:1 support in the workplace as required. The employment adviser's main remit was to find internship placements and to be there to offer advice when employment contracts were being negotiated. Both organisations are committed to improving employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities and feel that working together has strengthened their positions. Bicton College says:

'Part of our motivation to work with Pluss was the desire to get the best outcomes for our interns, and it was felt that Pluss' established reputation would enable us to reach a much wider range of employers. It was also seen as a good opportunity to link educational and local supported employment provision because as they move on, this is the route that the young people are likely to take.'

## **Descriptor of their supported internship delivery model from East Kent College**

We currently offer 16 internships for interns:

- aged 16-24;
- with a keen desire to work, preferably with some work experience gained;
- either already an independent traveller or willing to train to become one;
- able to study at a level 1; and
- not in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance.

Our programme runs for a full academic year from September to July, which spans 36 weeks of taught time. It includes the academic holidays to give our interns a real experience of work. They are encouraged to book their annual leave in advance with the employer and the college like any other employee. We work with a large number of local employers from a whole variety of different sectors. We've used information and awareness events, mailshots, cold-calling and visits to get employers on board. Although the programme itself has a clear structure, each individual's experience of it is unique to them, depending on their career aspirations and the support they need.

At the start of the supported internship journey, we invite the intern in for a profiling session to enable us to find out more about them and what they would like to achieve from the programme. One key element to this is to engage other key areas of support around the intern, e.g. their parent(s)/carers/guardians. The buy-in of the supporting parties is crucial to the intern staying on track and achieving a positive outcome in their study and gaining paid employment.

All interns are required to attend college one day a week which consists of 5 hours of taught time, studying towards a level 1 LASER award or certificate in 'Working towards Employment'. The other days of the week (of a varying number depending on the individual) are spent in the designated workplace, where active job coach support is given to ensure the intern can undertake the duties that the employer wishes them to do in a keen and confident manner. Typically we would have one intern in each workplace which has been carefully selected for the individual based on their needs, interests and aspirations. We try to get the interns into the workplace as soon as possible so that they can start to learn in a real work environment.

Our whole provision is supported in-house, so we do not buy in external agencies' support. We do, however, buy training in systematic instruction to ensure all our job coaches and support staff are completely equipped to support the intern in the best possible way. And we do work with other agencies, especially towards the end of the programme to ensure a positive progression and continued support for those who need it.

## 3.2 Staffing

### Summary

What the evaluation of the trial told us about effective supported internship teams. They need:

- careful planning, with clear job descriptions and people specifications in place;
- staff with a 'can-do' attitude who believe in the concept and are confident and empowered to make decisions;
- versatile, flexible team members with a complementary set of skills;
- multi-skilled staff who are able and willing to multi-task;
- staff with varying backgrounds and experience (e.g. sales, personal or professional knowledge of disability, employment services); and
- varied opportunities for training and development.

Providers need to ensure that they have in place a team of suitable staff who can work together to fulfil the main roles and functions required in order to deliver a successful supported internship programme. The team will need to work collaboratively and to have strong leadership.

### 3.2.1 Functions and roles

Providers will need to ensure the following core functions are met by their supported internship team to provide effective support for young people during their internships:

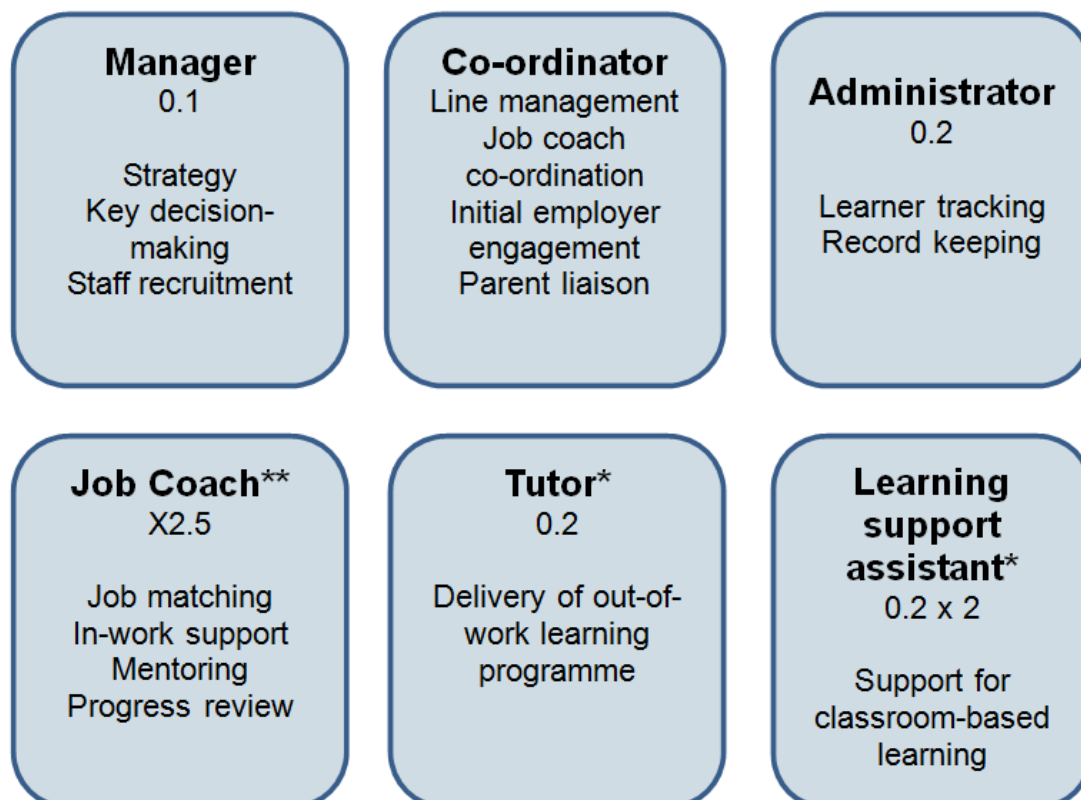
- Strategic management
- Management of staff team
- Employer engagement
- Employer liaison
- Day-to-day
- co-ordination
- Job coaching
- Teaching or tutoring

- Learning support
- Administration
- External liaison: parent/carer, agencies

These functions can be divided in different ways amongst team members, including those who are co-opted from partner organisations or from other teams within the learning provider. Job roles within teams may have over-lapping responsibilities. For example, some co-ordinators might also be involved in job coaching and employer liaison, while job coaches could also be responsible for employer engagement and some aspects of teaching. Sharing responsibilities in this way widens the understanding of the programme and means that staff can cover for one another when necessary. The specific and central role of the job coach is explored in more detail in the section 4 of the guidance.

### Example of a supported internship team

The team below is designed to meet the needs of a single group of 15 interns. It could be extended (e.g. by the addition of further job coaches, tutors and learning support staff) to work for larger intern groups or for multiple groups.



\* Bought in from other college departments

\*\* Supplied by partner supported employment agency

Figure 2 - Example of a supported internship team

### 3.2.2 Recruiting and building a supported internship team

A supported internship team needs members with a variety of complementary skills. Members of this team can either be learning provider staff or staff from partner organisations, such as job coaches from a supported employment agency. Where a provider chooses to create a dedicated in-house team, staff can be recruited from existing roles within the provider but it can be helpful to recruit externally to ensure a different approach which differentiates the programme from existing provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The skills which providers may need to look for outside of their organisations could include employer engagement and liaison skills, selling skills and coaching and mentoring. It can also be useful to recruit staff with contrasting backgrounds. These might include experiences of working with or for employers (including the private sector), for a supported employment agency, with disabled people, or on other into-work programmes or having personal experience of disability, which might be helpful when engaging with parents and carers.

In order to make effective recruitment decisions, including how to describe job roles and compile person specifications, staff responsible for recruitment may find it useful to do some research, for example undertaking job coach training themselves, reading relevant research reports, and looking at The National Occupational Standards for Supported Employment.<sup>16</sup> A list of useful documents is provided in the Further Reading section at the end of this guidance.

While skills and experiences are important, it is also important to ensure that staff have a can-do attitude and a strong belief in the young people's ability and right to work, which enables the team to engage with and inspire interns and their families and employers to aspire to paid work.

Providers should be aware that setting up a suitable staff team takes time. In addition, new recruits may need to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service check or require specific training before they are able to begin to work with vulnerable young people. Managers will need to factor in these requirements as they set up their provision.

### 3.2.3 Training and development

Learning providers may find it beneficial to carry out a skills audit across their team, including those of partners, to help identify training and development needs. The National Occupational Standards for Supported Employment can be a helpful tool in identifying skills needs and gaps. Training might include attending external training events, for example in job coaching skills, or working towards qualifications such as the

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<sup>16</sup> <http://base-uk.org/knowledge/national-occupational-standards>

Awards and Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners<sup>17</sup>. Development opportunities can also include, for example, observation of and coaching or mentoring by more experienced colleagues, visits to providers where supported internships are more established and in-house reflective practice sessions.

Specific areas of training cited as useful by colleges in the trial included:

- job coaching;
- systematic instruction (a specific in-work support approach based on task analysis);
- working with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- employer engagement; and
- management and planning.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.ocner.org.uk/qualifications/ocn\\_eastern\\_region\\_qualifications/supported\\_employment](http://www.ocner.org.uk/qualifications/ocn_eastern_region_qualifications/supported_employment)



## 4. Job coaching

### Summary

What the trial told us about effective job coaching:

- job coaches need a diverse skill set, including the confidence to work effectively with young people, employers and parents/carers;
- job coaches need to be flexible, adaptable, creative and willing to work outside term time, sometimes including anti-social hours;
- job coaches have a wide range of responsibilities, some of which will require them to undertake specific training;
- job coaching is significantly different from providing learning support, requiring a higher level of responsibility and autonomy;
- job coaches need to be able to recognise when and how to provide support, and when to increase, decrease or remove support; and
- job coaches need high levels of energy and enthusiasm and above all a belief in the young person's right and ability to achieve paid employment.

Job coaching is one of the main success factors and a key differentiating feature of supported internships.

### 4.1 Roles and responsibilities

The core role of the job coach is to provide tailored support to:

- young people to enable them to gain, learn from, develop in and maintain their internship and to make a positive progression on to paid sustainable employment; and
- employers to enable them to offer a meaningful internship and recruit interns where possible.

The range of responsibilities that job coaches take on within their role varies.<sup>18</sup> Each learning provider needs to scope out the role in a way that will work for them in their setting and within the wider team and to suit the needs of the interns. Depending on the extent and range of their responsibilities, job coaches will be able to support a varying

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<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive guide to job coaching, see best practice guidelines from *Valuing People Now – Employment*: [http://base-uk.org/sites/base-uk.org/files/\[user-raw\]/11-06/supported\\_employment\\_and\\_job\\_coaching- best\\_practice\\_guide....pdf](http://base-uk.org/sites/base-uk.org/files/[user-raw]/11-06/supported_employment_and_job_coaching- best_practice_guide....pdf)

number of interns. Job coaches typically support between three and five interns, but some work with considerably more, drawing on the support of other staff where needed.

It should be noted that Access to Work funding is available for job coaches (see section 9.3.1), but only where they support interns directly in their work placements. Other support provided by a job coach will need to be funded separately.

Job coaches can be involved in the following range of activities:

#### **4.1.1 Pre-placement at work**

- vocational profiling and assessment
- sourcing potential employers, identifying possible internships through cold-calling, visits, liaising with other departments
- undertaking job matches
- job analysis
- negotiating or 'carving' job roles<sup>19</sup>
- helping interns to prepare for and accompanying them to interviews
- supporting interns to develop CVs
- travel and mobility training
- sourcing and gathering relevant documentation for work
- helping interns to sort out travel arrangements (e.g. planning routes or getting bus passes)
- accompanying interns on visits to the workplace prior to starting a job

#### **4.1.2 Workplace support**

- attending workplace inductions and first day or first few days at work
- mentoring and confidence-building
- learning the job role in readiness for training the intern
- training the intern to master tasks
- breaking down tasks, sometimes applying systematic instruction techniques
- modelling workplace behaviours
- target-setting and monitoring and reviewing progress

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<sup>19</sup> Job carving is a term for tailoring a job so it is suitable for a particular worker and their skills. This approach generates employment opportunities for young people with SEN, and can lead to improved productivity for the employer. See <http://base-uk.org/employers-recruitment-jobcarving>

- encouraging intern self-assessment/reflection
- regular workplace visits
- observation of interns
- prompting and reminding interns
- producing visual or written aids and reminders (e.g. step-by-step task list)
- re-phrasing or repeating employer instructions
- checking interns' understanding
- negotiating an increase in responsibilities or new activities
- supporting interns to try out new ways to do things if they are not successful at first
- trouble-shooting or advocating for intern when things go wrong
- identifying skills development needs and either addressing them or referring to other staff
- determining if an intern needs to move placement and arranging for that to happen

#### **4.1.3 Support for employers**

- explaining an intern's strengths and support needs
- advising on reasonable adjustments
- sharing successful strategies (e.g. for communication or disciplining an intern)
- being a first point of call if issues or problems arise and negotiating solutions
- providing information about a particular condition or impairment
- introducing the intern to his/her colleagues and offering advice on how to best support and include him/her
- identifying additional and/or more challenging tasks or roles that an intern could take on
- suggesting appropriate ways to explain tasks, developing supporting accessible resources of use to the wider workforce
- ensuring interns are on task and meeting workplace standards and expectations (e.g. for time-keeping/attendance)

#### **4.1.4 Towards the end of the internship**

- negotiating opportunities for paid employment with employer providing internship
- supporting interns in job search and application
- CV revisions

- helping interns prepare for and accompanying them to job interviews
- signposting interns to other services (e.g. Access to Work) and if necessary liaising with these agencies
- introducing interns to other agencies (e.g. local supported employment services)
- identifying volunteering possibilities

#### **4.1.5 Other roles during the internship**

- mediating between parents and interns
- keeping parents informed of progress
- mentoring
- providing a link between classroom and workplace learning
- reporting on progress to co-ordinator/manager
- providing mutual support for other job coaches
- identifying relevant further learning opportunities

## **4.2 Skills, attitudes and behaviours**

In order to fulfil these responsibilities, each job coach needs a diverse set of skills, attitudes and behaviours, and where a provider is employing several coaches, it will be important to build up a team with complementary skills and strengths.

Skills, attitudes and behaviours cited as important by job coaches interviewed as part of the evaluation of the supported internship trial:

- a positive outlook
- ability to anticipate need
- ability to drive/travel between sites
- ability to encourage and motivate others
- ability to exercise 'tough love'
- ability to multi-task
- ability to use own initiative
- adaptability
- assertiveness (to be applied with employers and interns)
- being 'a people person'

- belief in the supported internship programme and the young people's ability and right to work
- communication skills - with interns, employers, families, colleagues including those in other agencies
- confidence to be autonomous and make your own decisions
- creativity: being able to think outside of the box
- diplomacy
- empathy
- flexibility
- negotiation skills
- open-mindedness
- patience
- preparedness to 'roll sleeves up and get stuck in'
- problem-solving skills
- resilience
- resourcefulness
- responsiveness
- sales skills
- time management skills: time-keeping and prioritising

### **4.3 The job coach contract**

Job coaches need a contract which acknowledges that there will be a need for flexible working hours which require working outside of term times and may include evenings, weekends and bank holidays. In line with the provider's human resources procedures, job coaches will need to be able to travel to a variety of locations, sometimes at short notice, and if using their own cars should have business insurance. Job coaches should be covered by providers' lone working policies and procedures.

## 5. Recruiting and engaging Interns

### Summary

The evaluation of the trial told us that effective practice in recruiting interns includes:

- recruiting young people who really want to work;
- educating, informing and partnership-working with referral agencies and other college staff;
- positioning the supported internship programme as a progression route from other college courses;
- targeting learners while they are still in education; and
- being clear about the aim of the internship, the commitment required and its distinctiveness from college courses.

### Case study - Zak's story



As a result of his successful internship, Zak was offered an apprenticeship in the college restaurant. He says it has,

*given me the chance to carry out proper work... I don't care about the cash I just like working, but it has got its uses... It has made me more independent and I am able to help out with finances at home.*

Zak, who has Asperger's Syndrome, had completed a course in the Essential Skills Department at Seevic College the summer before the supported internship trial began. College staff knew that he was keen to work and that he was already volunteering at a local charity for people with physical disabilities. As a student he had a 100% attendance record and had demonstrated a variety of skills (such as attention to detail and commitment to a task) that they could see would be valued in the workplace if they could just help him into work. When invited to join the supported internship programme, Zak jumped at the chance. A series of conversations helped establish that he would like to work in catering as he enjoyed cooking at home. During this initial period, staff discussed with Zak the different sorts of opportunities in the catering sector. He thought he might like to work in a supermarket café, so the team set about looking for a willing employer. While the search was on, the internship co-ordinator decided to see if she could organise a temporary position for Zak in the college restaurant, to enable him to begin building up his catering skills straightaway. She met with the catering manager, explained what the internship programme was all about and how full support would be provided during the short period that Zak was in the kitchen - and left with the offer of temporary placement. Zak started with basic kitchen duties like washing up and cleaning the tables before progressing onto helping with the preparation of foods. After a few weeks, the hunt for the supermarket job was called off. The catering manager at the college restaurant wanted to keep Zak on as an intern. A tailored support package, including job coaching, was arranged for him, involving college staff, the catering manager and his colleagues.

Towards the end of the internship, the manager reflected:

*It is an amazing opportunity for a young person; it gives them an insight into the world of work through hands on experience. I am very pleased with the support from the staff of the supported internship, for both myself, my staff and for Zak. Zak is most helpful and happy to work with. He works to the best of his ability and he never forgets anything. His attendance is 100% and he is always willing to work extra. He is a pleasure to have around.*

It's also led to a busy social life. Zak has been paintballing with colleagues (where he won the 'Top Gun' Award) and regularly meets up with them out of work.

Zak's Mum can't speak highly enough of the supported internship:

*The Supported Internship has given Zak a brilliant opportunity to start an apprenticeship in an area that he loves. The support from the college, the catering staff and the manager has been brilliant, even now since he has started the*

*apprenticeship. He has become more confident and he eats more as he never used to eat. He wants to experiment with cooking. Every Sunday he helps me with the dinner and he tells me that I am doing it wrong and tells me the correct way to cook things. I can't put it into words what it has done for Zak, he is brilliant and I am so proud of him.*

Getting the right learners onto supported internships is critical to the success of the programme. Providers need to think in terms of both eligibility and suitability.

## 5.1 Eligibility

In order to be eligible for a supported internship, a young person must be aged between 16 and 24 and have a statement of special educational needs) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Increasingly, as EHC plans are implemented and supported internships become part of the Local Offer, it is likely that a young person's EHC plan will explicitly reference a supported internship as the most appropriate provision to support the achievement of the outcomes they have identified, where these are employment-related.

Where a provider believes that a young person with a learning difficulty or disability, but without a statement or EHC plan, would benefit from a supported internship, they should contact the local authority to request an assessment of their education, health and care needs and to confirm the appropriateness of a supported internship. This may be particularly pertinent during the transition period while EHC plans are being introduced, for young people who had a statement at school which has now lapsed because they have spent some time out of education, for example in work or Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

From September 2014, local authorities will be under a duty to decide whether an assessment is necessary and where it is, to carry out an assessment to determine whether special educational provision needs to be provided through an EHC plan. Providers should be aware that not all assessments will result in an EHC plan. Where an EHC plan is required, it has to be finalised within 20 weeks of the original request for an assessment. Providers will need to take these factors into account when directly recruiting young people onto supported internships. Local authorities are also under a duty to keep local education, training and care provision under review, and consider the extent to which it is sufficient for the young people for whom they are responsible. They also have a duty to ensure that young people have access to appropriate learning programmes.

## 5.2 Suitability

In order to benefit from a supported internship, young people need to:



- have employment as their main focus;
- really want to work; and
- be at the right stage in their learning and development to benefit from a supported internship.

The desire to work is more likely to affect the outcome of the internship than an intern's existing employability skills, awareness of the world of work, previous experience of the workplace, confidence level, or degree of support needed. Parents and carers sharing their son's or daughter's aspiration for employment is also an important factor, although providers can work on raising parental aspirations during the course of the programme.

A wide variety of learners can benefit from a supported internship. Interns involved in the supported internship trial had a range of different support needs including moderate to more severe learning disabilities, sensory impairments, physical disabilities and autism. There does not appear to be any direct link between a particular type of support need and success in gaining paid employment.

### **5.3 Recruitment and engagement practices**

As with any new programme, providers need to raise awareness of their supported internship programmes amongst key partners, including:

- local authorities;
- referral agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus or local youth support services;
- other learning providers such as neighbouring 16+ providers and feeder schools;
- parent groups; and
- colleagues within their own organisation.

This awareness-raising needs to begin as soon as possible, to enable recruitment to start early and the necessary time allocated for assessing young people's suitability for an internship. Early recruitment also allows for maximum planning time to shape the individual approach needed for each young person.

Once the local authority has published its Local Offer, as required by the Children and Families Act, providers need to ensure that the supported internship programme is clearly described as one option within this offer. This will enable consideration of a supported internship to be included in transition planning, starting with the Year 9 review.

Providers can also offer open afternoons or evenings for learners and their parents and carers and other interested parties. These might involve employers, delivery partners and current or previous interns who can share their experiences. Learners can be invited in to drop-in workshops to sample the supported internship programme and get a feel for how it differs from other college courses. Providers can also develop publicity materials that present their internships from the different perspectives of previous interns, employers and parents/carers.

When interviewing prospective interns and discussing the course with parents and carers, providers will need to determine the young person's commitment to achieving employment and make it clear that they will be required to comply with workplace conditions, for example for attendance, time-keeping, appropriate workplace behaviours and dress code. Providers can use assessment techniques such as requiring prospective interns to undertake competitive interviews for a supported internship place or to undertake work-related tasks either individually or in small groups. Young people should also be reassured that full support will be available to them in order to help them succeed on the programme.

## 5.4 Providing support to interns

### Summary

What the evaluation of the trial told us about effective provision of support for interns:

- the amount and type of support needs to be tailored to the individual;
- interns should be encouraged to actively participate in determining and reviewing their support package;
- job coaches benefit from having a 'toolkit' of different support strategies, including systematic instruction;
- support should generally be tapered to encourage increased independence;
- the need for support should be closely monitored as it is likely to fluctuate across the programme;
- there are often 'natural' forms of support available in the workplace (e.g. from colleagues or buddies) ;
- employers need to understand the role of the job coach in providing support so they don't see them as 'in the way'; and
- employers should be part of the decision-making process about how much, when and what type of support is needed.

The high level of individualised support provided to interns is a key distinguishing feature of the supported internship programme. The amount and nature of the support provided will differ from one intern to the next, depending on their needs. However, as a general principle the support provided should be that which will enable the intern to be as independent as possible, and will vary according to need during the internship, often decreasing over the length of the internship as the intern becomes more confident in the workplace.

For many interns, direct support may have been withdrawn altogether in the latter stages of the internship, although the job coach and/or other college staff will remain 'on call', via phone or email as needed. Often 'natural' forms of support provided by the employer and the intern's colleagues replace the job coach's support once the intern is well-established.

For other interns, some form of formal support may always be needed and it will be a case of reducing that to the minimal level required by the young person in order to do their job effectively. It will be particularly important in these cases to ensure that there is a plan for on-going support once they progress to paid employment.

As described in section 4, the job coach will normally be the key provider of support to interns, although learning support staff, personal care staff and professionals with specific expertise (such as an interpreter, a travel trainer or a counsellor) may also be providing complementary forms of support. Workplace support will almost always be provided mainly or solely by the job coach. Interns may also need support in the form of specialist equipment, including assistive technology, that may reduce their need for support from job coaches or other people. Interns may be eligible for Access to Work funding for equipment of this nature.

Key to providing support in a way that maximises interns' chance of success is getting the amount and type of support right for each individual. These two factors will vary for each intern and at different stages of the programme. Most interns will need intensive support at the start of their internship, as described in the paragraphs above, but they may also need renewed support if there is a change in their responsibilities, if other factors in the workplace change (e.g. a new manager or colleagues or a revised rota), or if there is a change in their personal circumstances (e.g. something unsettling happening at home or as they begin to take the bus to work rather than get a lift).

Examples of some of the different kinds of support provided by job coaches are detailed in section 4.

**Observation from an employer in the leisure sector involved in the trial**

*The job coach came in every day at some point for the first few weeks as [the intern] was very shy and had very little confidence. Now she just pops in for an hour. There is plenty of support for [the intern] here and she is confident now to ask for help if she needs it.*

## Suggestions from providers involved in the trial

*Just as important as knowing when to support is knowing when not to support. You do have to let young people make mistakes and then help them learn from them. Support needs to be tapered if learners are going to increase independence. (College lead for supported internships)*

One college used a traffic light system to monitor the level of support required:

*We use a traffic light system that's worked really well, so we only withdraw support for a task when the intern, employer and job coach all agree it's a green. We reduce support at amber and are pretty much there one-to-one full time at red. (Job Coach)*

## 5.5 Reviewing progress and support needs

Providers need to operate some form of formal review process to check whether:

- the intern is making progress in their job role;
- the intern is increasing their employability and independence skills;
- the support package is appropriate; and
- the internship placement continues to meet the intern's and employer's requirements.

Providers will need a system such as the 5-stage RARPA<sup>20</sup> (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) process to support the recognition and recording of progress and achievement on a supported internship. A set of standards and criteria against which colleges can quality assure their RARPA processes have been developed to ensure greater consistency and credibility and a guidance document is available.<sup>21</sup> Progress checks should happen at regular intervals, and involve all the key partners: the intern, the employer, the job coach and relevant college staff. It can also be very helpful to invite parents and carers to participate in a review, with the learner's permission. A review will always involve the intern in a discussion with a key member of staff, often the job coach. Other partners can either attend these meetings or feed in information, by completing forms, sending e-mails or texts or through a telephone or face-to-face conversation ahead of a meeting.

Findings from a review can help providers and interns to:

- recognise and celebrate progress and achievement;
- identify skills that they need to work on;

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<sup>20</sup> RARPA is a tool to measure the progress and achievement of learners on some further education courses that does not lead to an externally accredited award or qualification.

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/27596> for guidance on how to quality assure RARPA in provision for learners with learning difficulties.

- identify barriers to progress and work out together how to address them;
- re-shape the support package (to include different support strategies, or to reduce or increase support);
- negotiate new responsibilities at work for the intern;
- resolve issues or problems; and
- help parents and carers understand how they can support their young person.

## 6. Working with parents and carers

### Summary

What the evaluation of the trial told us about effective practice in working with parents and carers:

- with the young person's permission, involve parents and carers as early as possible;
- address parent/carer concerns (e.g. about benefits, readiness to travel independently) from the start;
- harness the support that parents and carers are willing to offer; and
- be prepared to mediate where necessary when parent/carer wishes or aspirations differ from those of the young person.

Although it will not always be possible or appropriate to involve the parents or carers of interns, working with them can be a significant factor in making a supported internship successful. Parents and carers can be an important source of support and act as key partners in the internship. If they are not fully engaged, there is the potential for them to be a barrier to a young person's achievement. This can happen where parents and carers have different views from the young person or the provider on the young person's level of independence, for example, their readiness to travel independently.

Providers should seek the intern's permission to involve their parents and carers and will need to be sensitive in the way in which they work with them, as the interns will themselves be approaching adulthood or already be young adults. It is important that parent/carer involvement is not perceived by the young people as undermining their independence or diminishing their role in the decision-making process, as set out in the SEN Code of Practice.

The SEN Code of Practice also says that when a child is very young, or SEN is first identified, families need to know that the great majority of children and young people with SEN or disabilities, with the right support, can find work, be supported to live independently, and participate in their community. Local authorities must ensure that the EHC plan review at Year 9, and every review thereafter, includes a focus on preparing for adulthood.

Research from the Shaw Trust<sup>22</sup> supports this: discussions should not only include options for work, but also tackle issues such as the friendship potential of employment; the monetary arguments for working; how potential bullying and exploitation might be

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<sup>22</sup> See [http://gettingalife.org.uk/conference/Shaw\\_Trust\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](http://gettingalife.org.uk/conference/Shaw_Trust_Summary_Report.pdf)

guarded against through good job finding; adequate supervision; and the positive advocacy of those supporting the young person.

### **Example of active parental involvement in the supported internship trial**

A father, who was nervous about his daughter learning to use public transport, decided he would like to 'travel-train' his daughter himself.

He followed advice from the college and provided a gradually diminishing level of support, starting by accompanying his daughter on the bus, then sitting separately from her, then waiting with her at the bus stop to make sure she caught the right bus.

After a few weeks his daughter was travelling independently

## **6.1 At the start of the programme**

Parents and carers can be usefully involved, with the intern's agreement, from the start of their programme. Inviting them to participate at the engagement and recruitment stage can help ensure their understanding that the primary aim of the programme is to find paid employment. Providers can hold open evenings, invite parents and carers in for afternoon tea or even arrange home visits. This gives providers the chance to refer parents and carers to other agencies or sources of information including for benefits advice, and better-off calculations, if this is a concern for them. Parents can also be invited to discussions in the induction and initial assessment stage, where they can set out their hopes and ambitions for their young person. These early meetings also give the providers the opportunity to challenge any low or unrealistic aspirations and, if necessary, mediate between parents and carers and young people if they have different ambitions for the young person's future.

## **6.2 During the programme**

Throughout the programme parents and carers can be kept informed and involved, with the young person's permission, through regular communication, whether through a formal review process or more informal phone calls.

## **6.3 Towards the end of the programme**

Parents and carers can be involved towards the end of the internship, as decisions are made about next steps with providers taking a mediating role if the young person and their parents and carers have different views about these. Parents and carers can sometimes offer support in job search and application and interview preparation. Where

a young person has not been able to gain paid employment or where they need continued in-work support, parents and carers, as well as the young people, can be informed about agencies that can provide further support, and even providers can broker meetings where appropriate.

Parents and carers of young people appreciate:

- being invited to open days/evenings to help them understand the programme, including its strong focus on employment;
- receiving leaflets setting out the aims of the programme and the activities in which their young people would be involved;
- opportunities to meet key staff, such as the job coach, at the start of the programme;
- regular updates on progress and opportunities to comment on progress from their perspective;
- being contacted about any issues or problems so that they could help 'nip them in the bud';
- being informed of successes and achievements; and
- being treated as a key partner whose views are valued.



## 7. Working with employers

### Summary

What the evaluation of the trial told us about working with employers:

- employers should be treated as key partners in the supported internship; it must work for them as well as the intern;
- staff involved in employer engagement must be able to sell the benefits of the supported internship;
- building and managing relationships with employers is time-consuming but essential;
- employers need a clear understanding of the commitment needed from them and the support they will be offered;
- employers need quick and easy access to job coaches and/or learning provider staff to ensure any issues are quickly addressed; and
- employers can play a key role in helping an intern secure paid employment, even if it's not in their own company or organisation.

Successful internship programmes are dependent on the learning provider working in partnership with one or more employers across a number of key stages:

- engagement with and recruitment of employers;
- job matching, including job carving;
- induction and 'settling in';
- the duration of the internship; and
- securing sustainable paid employment for the intern.

### 7.1 Engagement and recruitment of employers

#### Summary

What the evaluation of the trial told us about effective practice in engaging employers:

- face-to-face and one-to-one contact is valuable;
- targeting employers already known to the provider;
- approaching employers who work with disabled people as clients;
- selling the benefits of the supported internship and the abilities of the intern, clarifying the employer role;

- emphasising the support available to employers, especially the job coach role;
- being up-front about the expectation that there is a job available at the end, provided the intern meets the required standard; and
- building up (and keeping warm) a bank of employers interested in principle.

Effective employer engagement is a key success factor and sometimes one of the greatest challenges learning providers face in establishing their programme. Successful strategies for targeting employers include:

- working with employers who already have a relationship with the college and extending that to include supported internships;
- identifying employers who had experience of working with people with learning difficulties or disabilities as clients;
- working in partnership with other learning providers and liaising within their own organisation to share the load and to prevent the same employers being approached repeatedly;
- approaching employer groups (e.g. through presenting at an existing meeting) and using provider membership on existing groups;
- setting up business breakfasts;
- creating and distributing marketing material to promote supported internships; and
- once the internship programme is established, drawing on success stories. This can include inviting employers to meet interns who are now employed and employers who have benefitted from taking part, and producing case studies.

Selling the benefits of supported internships to employers is critical to securing their engagement. There is a wide range of resources available that set out the evidence base relating to the benefits of employing disabled people. This material can help learning providers to prepare for and take part in conversations with employers as part of the engagement process.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions> for a comprehensive guide addressed directly to employers. The Business Disability Forum, an employer organisation that offers information and support on disability as it affects business, is also a useful source of advice for employers: <http://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/>.

## **Ways to demonstrate to employers the advantages of engaging with supported internships**

The following benefits for employers have been identified by Plumpton College during the supported internship trial. They use these to help those involved in employer engagement to present a positive case to employers.

- Gets you involved in a new, ground-breaking project.
- Access to specialist job matching.
- We act as free recruitment company so reduce recruitment costs.
- Interns may have skills currently lacking in existing staff (e.g. high-functioning autism can result in young people having significantly above-average accuracy).
- Money-saving due to job carving.
- In-work training provided by job coach.
- It acts as an extended working interview which gives you an increased chance of getting the right person.
- Increased diversity of workforce to reflect your customers and society.
- Disability awareness training for staff (provided by us).
- Contribution to society.
- Help achieving equality and diversity targets.
- Increased staff retention (evidence of lower staff turnover amongst people with a disability).
- Potential supervisory or mentoring opportunities for junior staff.
- Your competition is offering internships!

It is also helpful to be prepared to address an employer's potential concerns, some of which may be based on misunderstandings or myths about employing people with disabilities. The table below covers some of the key concerns employers may have (expressed in the terms they may use), and ways in which the learning provider can reassure them.

<b>Employer concern</b>	<b>Learning provider reassurance</b>
1. Might it affect productivity?	The job coach will work with the young person to ensure they pick up the tasks required of them to make sure productivity is not affected.
2. Will it take up a lot of time for employer and staff?	Clearly there is some input needed, but the learning provider will set that out very clearly from the start and it's something that will be kept under review. However, the job coach will do much of the training after an initial induction and providing of support so staff shouldn't find themselves over-burdened.
3. Are there health and safety issues?	Interns are covered by the employer's insurance as for any employed staff. For the vast majority of interns, there will be no need for any considerations beyond those that exist for all staff. If there are particular issues, these will be discussed openly with the employer and strategies agreed between learning provider, employer and intern with support provided to implement any additional control measures. The learning provider will do an initial risk assessment at the job matching stage, which should prevent interns being placed in unsuitable environments in the first place.
4. Do we know how to cope/communicate with a disabled person? What if we can't manage their behaviours or meet their support needs?	The job coach can support both staff and employer to communicate effectively with the intern and provide advice on strategies for managing challenging behaviours or creating an environment which will minimise the risk of such behaviours occurring. The job coach will always be available to the employer, on site or at the end of a phone, if issues/concerns are arising.
5. Can someone with a disability or learning difficulty really do any of the jobs I could offer?	Employers are often surprised at just how much a person with a learning difficulty or disability is able to do, once the right support is in place. It may also be useful to think how a specific role might be 'carved' for an individual if tasks were allocated differently across a team. Some employers have found productivity is increased when they take this approach (e.g. freeing up some staff from data entry work, taken on by the intern, so they can do more customer-facing activity).
6. What will other staff or customers/clients make of it?	The job coach can support the staff to understand the abilities and needs of the intern. It is rarely a problem for existing staff and often brings out the nurturing side of one or more colleagues who thrive in that role. Customers and clients are often pleased to see a diverse

	workforce, especially if it helps the workforce to better reflect the client group – and that’s any workforce that serves the general public. If issues do arise, the job coach can help negotiate solutions.
7. Will a job coach just get in the way and be an extra burden?	Job coaches are very skilled in making their presence as unobtrusive as possible. They are likely to be around quite a lot to start with – but this is very helpful to the employer in getting the intern trained up to do the job and ironing out any teething issues. As the intern grows more confident, the job coach will begin to withdraw although will do some light-touch monitoring and be available to intern or employer if additional support is needed (e.g. if employer introduces new or more challenging tasks).
8. Will I face some kind of equality / discrimination challenge if I don’t recruit the intern at the end?	Employers are not obliged to recruit the intern at the end of the internship. This is the ideal outcome but is not always possible. Employers are only expected to recruit the intern if there is a vacancy and the intern is the best candidate for the job. Providers will expect them to apply their normal recruitment procedures – with reasonable adjustments to the process as required, as for any disabled job applicant.

Employer engagement is often a two-tier process, where the learning provider begins by securing the interest and willingness to be involved from a wide range of employers before negotiating specific internships for particular young people.

## 7.2 Job matching

### Summary

What the evaluation of the trial told us about effective job matching

To get the right intern into the right job role, you need:

- thorough vocational profiling of interns;
- opportunities to explore different options for uncertain interns;
- to challenge low or unrealistic aspirations;
- clear understanding of employers and requirements of job roles;
- to be prepared to negotiate with employers, including job carving;
- a match to interest, aspiration, skills and potential – and in the right location for the intern;
- job roles that are likely to lead directly to employment;
- sufficient hours on offer; and
- opportunities for development and progression.

Key to the success of an individual internship is the business of getting the right young person into the right job role with the right employer. Job matching enables providers to ensure that the individual intern is placed in a job role that matches their abilities, interests and ambitions in a working environment that suits their needs. This may involve an element of job carving, whereby the learning provider works with the employer to shape a role for a particular individual which is suited to their strengths, and results in benefits to the employer, such as greater productivity, ability to offer more flexibility to other staff or to free them up from tasks they are ill-suited to.

Successful job matching relies on providers having a detailed understanding of the individual's abilities, interests and ambitions, normally achieved through an initial assessment process which includes vocational profiling. Learning providers and partner agencies with experience of running supported internships have shown that it is possible to find internship placements to match all sorts of aspirations and interests. For example, Alfie from East Kent College (featured in section 3.1.1) had a passion for classic cars and was found a position working as a classic car restoration technician; and Gary, an ardent Manchester United fan from Manchester College - partner organisation, Pure Innovations, found a receptionist role placement at the National Football Museum, where he is now employed as a lift attendant.

Job matching also requires a thorough understanding of the potential job role. This can be gained through a **job analysis** which will include an investigation of the job

description, understanding of the tasks involved and the workplace context, including information such as the extent to which a role is customer-facing, the interactions with colleagues required, the physical environment and the workplace culture.

**Vocational profiling** differs from more standard forms of initial assessment in that it focuses on:

- the world of work;
- interns' preferences for and past experience of employment;
- their strengths and abilities which would allow them to make a positive contribution in the workplace;
- their support needs in a working environment; and
- gauging interns' understanding of different aspects of work and types of jobs available.

The findings from vocational profiling can sometimes be used to challenge low or unrealistic aspirations or identify a need for further exploratory work, for example where a young person reveals that they have no idea about the sort of job they would like or be good at. Interns sometimes state that they would like a job for which a very high level of qualifications is required and which is therefore not realistic. The vocational profiling process can be used to understand what it is about the job that the intern is attracted to and therefore what other roles might match their interests and abilities. For example, one intern on the trial expressed a desire to be a doctor. The job coach identified through discussion that in fact she wanted a role where she could help people: the college found her a customer service role in a retail setting which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Providers use the information gained from vocational profiling to source a suitable job role for each individual, either drawing on a database of 'interested' employers already established or, where no clear match can be found there, by seeking out additional employers. The provider will need to use their findings from the job analysis to determine the fit between a specific job role and an individual. In addition, they should be prepared to make judgements about the quality of the internship on offer. For example, is the employer offering sufficient hours, are there opportunities for an intern to develop, is there any likelihood of a job at the end of it?

Some account also needs to be taken of an intern's circumstances. For example, it must be possible for an intern to get to their place of work and without incurring unreasonable travel costs.

**Example of job matching tool used by Plumpton College during the supported internship trial**

**Internship placement suitability assessment**

<b>Intern name</b>	<i>Joe Smith</i>		
<b>Employer</b>	<i>ABC Leisure</i>		
<b>Position</b>	<i>Admin officer</i>		
<b>Location suitability</b>	<i>5</i>		
<b>Level of match to intern skills</b>	<i>5</i>		
<b>Level of match to intern preference</b>	<i>4</i>		
<b>Quality of employer</b>	<i>4</i>		
<b>Chance of paid work</b>	<i>5</i>		
<b>Overall suitability Total/5</b>	<i>4.6</i>		

**Score each element out of 5**

**Overall scores: 1 - 2 = low    2.1 - 3 = Medium    3.1 - 4 = High    4.1 – 5 = Very high**

### 7.3 Induction and settling in

It is important for an intern to be offered an induction to the workplace and for the job coach to negotiate with the employer some form of settling in period, where both intern and employer are offered extensive support. It is often appropriate to begin the induction period before an intern formally starts in their role. Useful activities can include:

- a visit by the intern with job coach to show them around the work environment;
- face-to-face meetings between employer, college staff and job coach to discuss the structure of the programme and the needs of the individual intern (with or without the intern present); and
- the intern attending the workplace to shadow a colleague in a similar job role for one or two days.

Induction might also include an employer’s standard induction processes for all staff, with the job coach adjusting elements to ensure accessibility and/or providing additional information.

The job coach will work very closely with both employer and intern during the initial training period. In particular, the job coach will need to understand the tasks and responsibilities of the intern’s role and the standards expected. They may then support the intern through a training programme led by the employer or in discussion with the



employer, or undertake the training themselves and devise an approach to delivering the training to match both the employer's needs and the intern's preferred learning style. Cross-referencing the information about the job gained from job analysis with details about the learner's abilities, acquired through vocational profiling, gives the job coach an idea of the skills gap they will need to address during the internship placement.

As the young person adjusts to a new environment and new responsibilities, 'teething problems' may occur (e.g. an intern struggling with punctuality or wearing the correct clothing). During this time, the job coach may need to apply their negotiation skills to ensure that the employer allows the intern the time to adapt to the job role, while impressing on the intern the need to meet the basic requirements of the role and supporting them to do so.

While determining any reasonable adjustments needed is likely to be a factor at the job matching stage, in the first few weeks of a placement, the job coach may need to provide the employer with support in implementing these adjustments in a way that works for both intern and employer. This initial period in the workplace also provides an opportunity for the job coach to support the intern's colleagues and manager to understand the needs and abilities of the intern. Providers will have already set out their expectations of the employer (e.g. a monthly contribution to a progress review) during the engagement and recruitment stage, but they should remind employers of these during the first few weeks and ensure processes are in place from the start.

## **7.4 The duration of the internship**

Employers should be treated as on-going partners throughout the internship. They need to feel supported, through regular visits by learning provider staff to the employer site and on-going dialogue. Employers value having a job coach or co-ordinator's mobile phone number so that they could get in touch at any time and issues can be dealt with promptly.

Employers also need to be involved in reflecting on an intern's progress, both informally through conversations with a job coach and by more formal contributions to a review process (although these can be records of a conversation with a staff member to reduce the burden on the employer). See section 5.5 above.

Supporting the development of the intern is a shared responsibility between staff from the learning provider, the job coach and the employer. An employer should feel confident in asking the learning provider (perhaps via the job coach) to provide some input on a specific area of knowledge or skill development (e.g. some numeracy work to support handling of cash payments), or access to a particular qualification (e.g. Handling Pesticides) to enable the intern to extend their range of responsibilities. In turn, the learning provider or job coach might ask an employer to provide the intern with opportunities to practise specific skills they have been working on in college (e.g. to have some customer contact in order to practise meeting and greeting skills).

Job coaches may need to negotiate with employers where they feel that an intern needs new challenges and could be offered greater responsibilities. Equally it may be necessary for a job coach to agree a reduced or different role for an intern where they are struggling.

## 7.5 Securing employment for the intern

Wherever possible, an intern, who has made good progress through their internship and is able to meet the standards required by the employer for the job role, should be able to take up a position with their internship employer. This may involve the learning provider or job coach in opening negotiations with the employer to suggest that the time has arrived when the intern should be formally employed and paid for their work.

However, it is not always possible for an intern to be recruited by their employer at the end of the programme. This may be because the intern was not successful in achieving the standards necessary or because the employer was not in a position to recruit at the point where the internship had finished. Employers can still play an important part in helping an intern to achieve employment elsewhere or in the near future. Positive actions an employer can take include:

- using contact and networks to recommend an intern to other businesses with vacancies;
- providing interns with references;
- offering mock interviews;
- providing feedback on an actual interview where the intern was not successful; and
- keeping an intern's details on file and inviting them to interview when future vacancies arise.

### **Reflection of an employer involved in the supported internship trial**

*I think this is the most successful work placement scheme I have been part of. I am really proud of my interns. None of them have been off sick, they are never late, no one has dropped out and they have a great work ethic.*

(Hospitality and Catering Employer, who later took on one of his interns as an apprentice.) See Zak's story in section 5.

## 8. Achieving positive progression

### Summary

What the evaluation of the trial told us about effective practice in achieving positive progression for interns:

- it's never too early to plan for a positive outcome at the end of the internship;
- recruit interns who want a job at the end;
- select employers and internship placements likely to lead to paid work;
- work on developing skills and confidence-building that will be useful in many jobs;
- build in time and support to find paid work at the end of the internship;
- involve other agencies including Access to Work where continued support is necessary if interns are to hold onto the jobs they have gained;
- identify alternative positive progression (e.g. voluntary work, further learning) and work to secure these as appropriate where interns do not achieve paid employment; and
- refer interns to partner organisations who can help them continue in their journey towards paid employment (e.g. supported employment agencies).

**Achieving sustainable paid employment for the intern is the key aim of a supported internship.** To have the best chance of achieving this aim, providers need to keep it in mind at every stage of the internship programme, from appointing and training staff, selecting employers and recruiting interns to planning exit strategies at the end of the internship. Examples of possible actions providers can take at different stages of the programme, to maximise the interns' chance of a positive progression are included in the table below.

### 8.1 Planning for progression: examples of positive actions

Stage	Actions
Staff recruitment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appoint staff, particularly job coaches, who believe in the programme and its values, including the right and ability of disabled people to work.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training which enables staff to develop the skills to negotiate with employers and the knowledge of different work places and support strategies that will enable an intern to find a job that they can do.</li> </ul>
Intern recruitment and induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In all promotional materials and events, put the emphasis on achieving a job and the commitment required from the young person (as well as the support they will be offered) in order to do so.</li> <li>• Select interns who have a strong desire to work and have sufficient understanding of the world of work to benefit from a supported internship.</li> <li>• Tackle low aspirations early on in the process, including those of parents/carers.</li> <li>• Carry out in-depth profiling and where necessary enable interns to explore different working environments to identify jobs where they can draw on their strengths.</li> </ul>
Employer engagement and involvement and job matching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify employers who are likely to be in a position to offer jobs at the end of the internship.</li> <li>• Ensure employers know the end goal is employment – that it's not just work experience.</li> <li>• Introduce employers to the concept of job carving in order to get the best out of an intern/employee and for their business.</li> <li>• Get the best job match you can in order to increase the chances of a positive experience for employer and intern and increased likelihood that it will lead to a job.</li> <li>• Draw on the employers' experience to understand the key skills and knowledge an intern will need in order to secure paid employment in their sector.</li> </ul>
Workplace learning and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target the key skills needed in a particular job role but also other more generic skills which with support learners would be able to apply in other settings.</li> <li>• Tailor the support so that the intern is gradually growing more independent and ensure that the intern (and parents/carers, where appropriate) are aware of their growing independence.</li> <li>• Teach interns strategies for managing situations that they are likely to face in a workplace, so that they are able to sustain employment if they gain it at the end of their internship.</li> <li>• Support the employer to provide a rich set of experiences for the intern while in the workplace.</li> </ul>

<p>Off-the-job learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As well as more general employability skills, focus on the skills interns will need to apply for jobs, including job searching, building CVs, filling in application forms and interview skills, with plenty of opportunity for practice.</li> <li>• Identify and address each individual's potential barriers to achieving employment (e.g. by providing travel training).</li> <li>• Give the interns the opportunity to achieve relevant accreditation valued by employers, which is either a prior requirement of applicants for the roles they are interested in or which will set them apart from other applicants.</li> </ul>
<p>End of programme exit strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that an exit strategy is in place for each intern at the end of the internship so each has a positive progression route planned.</li> <li>• Identify other agencies which may be able to offer continuing support either in the workplace, such as Access to Work, if they have achieved employment or in order to help them in their onward journey towards a job.</li> </ul>

**Case study – Nigel's story**



Following several years of unpaid work experience, 23 year old Nigel embarked on a supported internship in a local café, preparing food and serving customers. He has since been successful in gaining paid employment.

## 9. Funding

The main source of funding for supported internships is the Education Funding Agency (EFA). However, there are additional sources of funding which can be used to supplement these funds.

### 9.1 Education Funding Agency funding

A supported internship is a type of study programme. EFA funding for study programmes is based on an assumption that on average, full-time programmes will include at least 600 planned learning hours. To count for funding purposes, planned hours that make up a coherent study programme must be timetabled, organised and/or supervised by the institution and within that institution's normal working pattern.

For students capable of studying and achieving qualifications, hours spent on achieving qualifications that are approved under section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 can be counted for funding purposes. Additionally, hours that:

- are delivered towards informal certificates or other non-qualification activity including activity to give young people skills to live more independently and be integrated within their community; or
- are for tutorial purpose; or
- are spent on work experience, other work-related activities, volunteering and/or community activities or enrichment activities organised and quality assured by or on behalf of the institution whether paid or not,
- count towards the definition of funded time/planned hours.

The core activities that learners will be undertaking while on a supported internship are all considered as appropriate for funding by the EFA.

It is essential that learning providers currently delivering supported internships, and those considering doing so, discuss their plans at the earliest opportunity with commissioning local authorities, as part of the planning process for the Local Offer. Planning discussions should take account of information about young people's aspirations coming out of Year 9 reviews and include consideration of the provision that learning providers will be funding from their own budgets. These discussions will enable authorities to agree and plan their budgets for young people with high needs and to consider changes in demand for and supply of new and emerging provision.

Since September 2013, institutions that receive a funding allocation directly from the EFA have been able to deliver supported internships.

Whilst a supported internship is a study programme for students with additional support needs, in most circumstances a supported internship can be delivered using core funding - programme funding and disadvantage funding - in combination with other support such as Access to Work.

Where a young person requires more significant support than high needs funding arrangements may apply and local authorities have the prime responsibility for planning and commissioning funding for high needs students. For high needs funding purposes, a student must be:

- i. a young person aged 16-18 who requires additional support costing over £6,000 per year; and
- ii. any young person aged 19-25 subject to an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan) who requires additional support costing over £6,000 per year.

There are three elements to high needs funding for post-16 students (except for students who are in special schools).

- Element 1 is paid to institutions by the EFA and represents the funding that all students at the institution attract for their basic programme. We fund the majority of institutions with post-16 provision on a lagged student basis, using the national post-16 funding formula.
- Element 2 is the second component of place funding paid to institutions by the EFA and provides £6,000 per year to help meet the additional support costs for high needs students.
- Element 3 is the funding required over and above the place funding (Element 1 and 2) to enable a student with high needs to participate in education and learning. Local authorities use the funds from their high needs block allocation, which is part of the dedicated schools grant (DSG), to pay top up funding directly to institutions for their students. In all instances, top up funding (Element 3) has to be agreed by the local authority with an institution, and a contract must be in place between the two parties. If the local authority does not agree to pay top up funding for a student, then they are not counted as high needs for funding purposes.

Further detail on the funding system for 16-25 high needs students can be found on our [website](#) and in our [16-25 high needs funding additional information document](#).



## 9.2 Further sources of funding for supported internships

### 9.2.1 Access to Work

Access to Work is a grant from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) which helps pay for practical support so that disabled people can do their jobs. From September 2013, DWP's Access to Work fund has been extended to supported internships (and traineeships) to allow funding of travel (providing assistance to interns who incur additional costs in travelling to and from work because of their disability) and the costs of support workers, including job coaches, or specialist equipment, for days that a young person is at the employer's premises. There is no set amount for an Access to Work grant, and how much an individual receives depends upon their circumstances.

Further information on applying for Access to Work funding including a flowchart that sets out who may be eligible for the funding and an application form can be found on the Preparing for Adulthood website.<sup>24</sup>

### 9.2.2 The 16 to 19 Bursary fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary fund<sup>25</sup> is a source of government funding provided to schools, colleges, training providers and local authorities to allocate to young people who need financial support to stay on in further education or training. For the most vulnerable<sup>26</sup> young people, a guaranteed bursary of £1,200 is available from the Learner Support Service.

Providers can use the 16 to 19 Bursary as a source of funding to help meet costs for travel, meals and equipment for young people participating in supported internships. It is not available to learners beyond the age of 19 at the start of the academic year.

#### Free meals for disadvantaged young people

School and academy sixth forms already have to provide free meals to disadvantaged students who are over 16. From September 2014, free meals will also be available to disadvantaged students (i.e. those who meet the criteria set out in guidance) taking Education Funding Agency funded courses in [other institutions](#).<sup>27</sup> Students do better in their studies when they have access to proper, regular meals.

Exactly what an institution provides for the free meal is a decision for the individual institution. However, institutions must encourage and support their students to make

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<sup>24</sup> Preparation for Adulthood - <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships/access-to-work-fund>. Access to Work - <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide>

<sup>26</sup> Vulnerable groups include young people in care, care leavers, those getting Income Support in their own right and those getting Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) plus Employment Support Allowance or the equivalent Universal Credit.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-free-meals-advice-for-fe-institutions>



healthy food choices. The expectation is that a meal, voucher or credit will be provided to eligible students. Where this is not practical, institutions will be able to offer cash in certain exceptional circumstances.

Funding for free meals is allocated directly to institutions. This funding can only be used to support students who meet the free meals criteria and cannot be added to other student support funding such as the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund in the 2014 to 2015 academic year. However, students who are eligible for a free meal may also receive additional support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund if the institution assesses they meet the criteria.

### **An account from East Kent College who were involved in the supported internship trial**

To fund the supported internship programme we looked at hours allocated to study programmes, and costing in class/subject hours against the study programme criteria. Classroom tutoring and job coaching in the workplace are funded from hours allocated to a study programme.

We also looked into the level of support needed to run a programme of this nature, including the job coaches and the supported employment officer and the provision of travel-training. All interns are identified as having high support needs and have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and this enables the college to draw down funding to meet all additional support needs as identified in the EHC plan. Support elements are costed against the high needs funding headings e.g. pre-entry, entry, on programme, and exit.

When calculating programme costs, staff are the primary consideration, including the tutor costs, supported employment officer, job coaches and in-class support. Using in-house staff and not buying in other external agency support allows us to keep the overall cost of the programme down. By having flexible job coach contracts we are able to use the right people in the right places at all times. This not only means that we are only paying for the actual time spent on support, but allows the right amount of support for the intern at the right time, so the quality of provision is never sacrificed.

It is also beneficial when calculating costs to keep class sizes low, as the smaller the class/group size, the more funding can be claimed through the high needs funding element. For example if you want to recruit 16 interns you can run 2 groups, so each group/class size remains smaller in size.

We utilise the college bursary funding from the local authority to provide support with travel and equipment costs if needed. We also negotiate with employers where possible, as they may have travel schemes for employees or can provide certain equipment in-house, so that we do not have to purchase it for the intern.

## 9.3 Funding for interns requiring on-going support after completing their internship

Although providers are not responsible for securing future funding for interns after the end of an internship, they may find it useful to be aware of the different sources that may be available, as they plan their exit strategies. The availability of services varies by local area and providers will need to clarify eligibility criteria for different sources of funding for provision in their area.

Funds that individuals may be able to access include:

### 9.3.1 Access to Work

Once a young person is in a paid job or self-employed, or about to start a job or work trial, an Access to Work grant can pay for support at job interviews and help with additional support costs in paid employment. It is paid regardless of the amount of hours worked as long as the employee is not in receipt of certain benefits. There is no set amount for an Access to Work grant, and how much an individual receives depends upon their circumstances. The employee (former intern) should apply as soon as the job is offered and not wait until they start working. They must apply within six weeks of starting a job to obtain the maximum support. Access to Work can pay for things such as:

- specialist equipment;
- adaptations to equipment;
- a support worker or job coach;
- communication support;
- excess costs of getting to work if someone is unable to use public transport or drive themselves; and
- disability awareness training for employers about the employee's specific condition.

### 9.3.2 Work Choice

For some young disabled people who enter paid employment, Access to Work may not be able to meet the full cost of their support needs, and Work Choice could be a possibility. Work Choice is a Department for Work and Pensions-funded programme which supports disabled people with the most significant barriers in gaining and keeping a job. For some young disabled people who are still job searching, Work Choice may be the most appropriate programme for them. Referral routes onto the programme vary; Disability Employment Advisers at local Jobcentre Plus should be able to provide information on these.

### **9.3.3 Local authority support**

Some local authorities commission supported employment through health and social care provision. Eligibility for these services varies, and local authorities should be able to provide this information. In addition, some local authorities provide direct payments for employment support for those eligible for health and social care. These routes may be available and most appropriate for some young people who meet eligibility thresholds.

### **9.3.4 European Social Funding or charitable funding**

European Social Funding or charitable funding can also offer other supported employment services, depending upon local availability.

## 10. Further information

### For information about supported internships and similar schemes

British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) <http://base-uk.org/>

Department of Work and Pensions (2013), *Drive to get more disabled people into mainstream jobs* [www.gov.uk/government/news/drive-to-get-more-disabled-people-into-mainstream-jobs](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/drive-to-get-more-disabled-people-into-mainstream-jobs)

Department for Education (2013) *Supported internship trial for 16 to 24 year old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities: An evaluation*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-difficultiesdisabilities-supported-internship-evaluation>

Supported internships <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-options-and-improving-provision-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-sen/supporting-pages/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-sen>

Preparing for Adulthood <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/> including in particular for guidance on study programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for a factsheet on supported internships

Project SEARCH <http://www.projectsearch.us/>

Realistic Opportunities for Supported Employment (ROSE), Case studies:  
<http://rose.havering-college.ac.uk/our-clients/client-case-studies.aspx>

Getting a Life <http://www.gettingalife.org.uk/resources.html> including Transition Pathways for Getting a Life

### Further sources of information

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/contents)

Association of Colleges (AoC) [www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk)

Diversity in the workplace: an overview <http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/diversity-workplace-overview.aspx>

LSIS (2012) *Supported employment National Occupational Standards (full suite)*  
<http://base-uk.org/knowledge/national-occupational-standards>

Mental Health Individual Placement and Support model  
<http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/employment/ips.aspx>

National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) Making it Work  
<http://shop.niace.org.uk/makingitwork.html>

Supported employment (mental health) fidelity scale  
[http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/employment/ips\\_fidelity.aspx](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/employment/ips_fidelity.aspx)

The Association of National Specialist Colleges (Natspec) <http://www.natspec.org.uk/>

OCN Eastern Region for QCF qualifications for supported employment practitioners  
[http://www.ocner.org.uk/qualifications/ocn\\_eastern\\_region\\_qualifications/supported\\_employment](http://www.ocner.org.uk/qualifications/ocn_eastern_region_qualifications/supported_employment)

## **Other departmental advice and guidance you may be interested in**

Department for Education (2012), *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability. Progress and Next steps*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-and-aspiration-a-new-approach-to-special-educational-needs-and-disability-progress-and-next-steps>

Destination measures <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-destinations>

EFA 16-19 funding formula  
<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/1/overview%20of%20the%2016%20to%2019%20funding%20formula%20june%202013.pdf>

16-19 Bursary fund <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

Department of Health (2010), *Prioritising need in the context of Putting People First: A whole system approach to eligibility for social care – Guidance on eligibility criteria for adult social care (England)*  
[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_113154](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_113154)

Department for Education (2013), *Traineeships: Supporting young people to develop the skills for apprenticeships and sustainable employment: Framework for delivery*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-young-people-to-develop-the-skills-for-apprenticeships-and-sustainable-employment-framework-for-delivery>

HM Government, *Supported Employment and Job Coaching: best practice guidelines*  
<http://base-uk.org/knowledge/supported-employment-and-job-coaching-best-practice-guidelines>

## Resources from other government departments

Benefits information <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/disability>

Access to Work <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>

Work Choice <https://www.gov.uk/work-choice/overview>

DWP (2012) Fulfilling Potential <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/fulfilling-potential/index.php>



Department  
for Education

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